

President Muhammadu Buhari's Regime and Erosion of Democracy in Nigeria, 2015-2019

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Abstract

All over the world, democracy is adjudged the best form of government that promotes development. This perhaps may be due to how it is structured to cater for the welfare of the people who in turn demand certain dividends, such as good governance, equality, freedom, social justice, and equalization of opportunities, observance of the rule of law, reliable and functional institutions, and accelerated development, among others. This article interrogated how the government of Muhammadu Buhari has conformed to some key tenets of democracy, namely: the rule of law, free press, political freedom, independent judiciary, and due process, and thereby ensured all-inclusive, and people-oriented government, which are prerequisites for development. In same vein, the paper further assessed the democratic postures of the current government, to identify areas that government has failed and thereby suggest the way forward for the nation's nascent democracy. The study is explorative, analytical in nature, and therefore relied on secondary data, using content analysis, for testing the variables. It adopted system theory for explanation of how a system functions interdependently to achieve a common purpose. The findings of the study reveal that firstly, modern democracy thrives in a society where the regime is favourably disposed to honouring its governing principles, and secondly, that the supposed democratic government under President Muhammadu Buhari falls short of these expectations based on the flagrant breach of the principles. It concludes that except there is a paradigm shift in the way the governing elites manipulate democracy in Nigeria and bend rules to suit their personal comforts, the masses will not benefit from the system and there will be no hope of development in the nation's democratic experiment.

Keywords: Democracy, Erosion, Transformative, Rule of law, Separation of power

1. Introduction

The age-long, simplest and perhaps the best definition of democracy is that given by a one-time President of America, Abraham Lincoln, as "government of the people, by the people and for the people" (Enaruna, 2014). The definition reflects the true essence of democracy practiced in the Greek City states, where the idea originated. The three prepositions, namely: of, by, and for, were used on a constant object, people, to show vividly that the place and permanent location where democracy resides is in the people

(Giuseppe, 1990). It underscores the fact that democracy is a people's-type government, owned by the people, and run or operated by the people (Burns, 1989). From this standpoint, the people therefore, should be the central focus and nucleus of democracy. It should be operated with the people's interest in mind – mainly to satisfy the wishes and expectations of the people (the owners of the form of government) (Hurd, et al., 1973).

Democracy considers the people as the central revolving door; the people double as electorates under a representative democratic setting. They possess the legitimate power and rights to install people in leadership positions and possess the power to remove whoever is found not to be acting according to the will of the people (Burns, 1989). These they can do through the instrumentality of the ballot box in a free, fair and credible electoral process. However, this “the people” concept appears to have been variously misconstrued in the current democratic experiment (Barbour & Wright, 2003). The understanding of the political class in this regard seems to be just their political parties and family members alone, which resembles a typical scenario that Tocqueville (1983) likened to democratic despotism.

This explains the alleged but evidentially conspicuous deviations from the practice of the aforementioned tenets of democracy in Nigeria, under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, thus culminating in the powers or sovereignty of the people dashed, ignored, flagrantly abused and undermined. The obvious consequence was the declaration by the president that his administration will discriminate between those who gave him 95% supports/votes from the 5% group. It meant that his government might not extend the so-called dividends of democracy to where they classify as enemy zone(s) in the country. The regime's stance on this policy justifies a study that examines the tenets of democracy and how they underscored the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, 2015 to 2019.

2. Conceptual Discourse

2.1. Democracy

As previously stated, the beginning of the idea of democracy is associated with the ancient Greece-City states. The word democracy itself is said to derive from the Greek word, “demokratia” – demo, (people), and kratia (rule) – that is, the people's rule (Gamble, 1981). Greece type democracy was however, the direct type where all adult citizens formed the legislature (Ikpe, 1988). This was, however, possible then because the size of the city was considerably small and less complex. Paradoxically, the system did not permit women to exercise franchise, it denied them participation in politics; the same way other classes of slaves did not enjoy any rights at all (Coax, et al, 1885; Woodhouse, 1938).

The ancient Greece City states' form of democracy, though it recognised equality of all citizens, failed to adopt gender equality and to develop a general conception of the equality of all humanity (Appadorai, 1975; Letwin, 1983; Gellner, 1987). Greek democracy was a brief historical episode, which had little direct influence on the theory or practice of modern democratic states. From the fall of Greek City-states to the rise of

modern constitutionalism, there is a gap of about two thousand (2000) years in the theory and practice of democracy (Sabine & Thorson, 1973; Anyaele, 2003).

The states that succeeded Greece were tribal or feudal kingdoms, which became largely transformed into absolute monarchies. This was the situation down to the time of the American and French Revolutions (Anyaele, 2003). In other words, certain factors led to the development of modern or representative democracy (Bealey, 1988). These include religion, disintegration of state authorities, historical writings, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the decline of Colonialism, and the rise of nationalism (Anderson, 1977). In modern democracy, citizens do not exercise their rights to make political decisions, such as legislation, in person; rather, they chose certain persons as representatives to make such decisions on their behalf (Bottomore, 1964; Dissanayake 2006). Democracy begets good governance, which in turn serves as a catalyst for all-round development in the system.

2.2. Democratic Dividends

Democracy dividends come in many forms, which sum up in development. Hodder (1978) argues that development is neither a simple, nor a straightforward linear process. As a multi-dimensional exercise, it seeks to transform society by addressing the entire complex of interwoven strands, living impulses, which are part of an organic whole (Galbraith, 1958). In sheer economic sense, Baishakhi (2011) posits that development is essentially maximising the production of goods and services available in a country; hence, lack of it is underdevelopment. The International Encyclopedia described development as, “purposive changes undertaken in a society to achieve what may be regarded generally as a different (improved) state of social and economic affairs” (Omu & Adebusoye, 1987).

In the views of Rogers (1976), “...development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita income and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organisation. For Dissanayake (2006), development is a form of modernisation at the social systems level. It is the process of social change, which has as its goal, the improvement in the quality of life of all or the majority of the people without doing violence to the natural and cultural environment in which they exist and which seeks to involve the generality of the people as closely as possible in this enterprise; making them the masters of their own destinies. The foregoing definition captures what this study sets out to examine.

Nonetheless, Moemeka, (1989) further argues that development is a positive change (for the better) from conditions (social, economic, political, cultural and human) that are no longer considered good enough for the goals and aspirations of a society to those that are most likely to meet those goals and aspirations. Similarly, Thierry & Wendy (2002) define development as being “about women and men becoming empowered to bring about positive changes in their lives; about personal growth together with public action; about both the process and the outcome of challenging poverty, oppression, and discrimination; and about the realisation of human potential through social and economic

justice. Above all, it is about the process of transforming lives and transforming societies (Moemeka, 1987).

In the definitions above, certain terms featured prominently. These include positive change, transformation, improvement, personal growth, public action, among others. These and many more are what are expected each time democracy is mentioned. It is a paradigm shift from a debased to an improved position. It is therefore, not out of place when the present government came with a change slogan, as democratic governance, expectedly, should bring about change. Thus, the notion of democracy dividends is basic to democratic governance.

In this context, the actions of President Buhari's government show a blockade on the path to achieving democracy. It grossly compromises democracy and undermines good governance in the country. At best, the country has witnessed colossal departure from the path of sustainable development. The World Summit for Sustainable Development list three forms in which sustainable development manifests: (i) care and respect for people, (ii) planet and (iii) prosperity (commercial activities) (Thierry & Wendy, 2002; Rogers, Singhal & Quinlan, 2003). It recognised these three pillars as of equal in importance. If any one aspect is ignored or given a higher priority than the others receive, the effect will be to unbalance and destabilise all the three aspects, because they are inter-connected and inter-dependent. It means also that these three aspects needed attention simultaneously – we cannot address them on a one at- a-time basis, as this would also create an imbalance (Manzer, 1984).

From the perspective of evolutionary process of human thinking, it is a common experience that humanity, at its lowest level of consciousness, operates in a purely survivalist mentality, and once it achieves the ability to survive, humanity moves forward in awareness, seeking to satisfy the desire for comforts and pleasure. Once it achieves a desirable level of comfort, the desire for self-expression and individuality motivates the thinking and behaviour of an individual. Those that control government and wealth of a state share much in common in this analogous illustration (Ekeh, 1993). This is part of the reasons that in any position in government, what preoccupies an individual is survival at the expense of others. The personal material attainments and social status, to them, are synonymous with development in the system, which is misleading and against the common good of a society.

2.3. Transformative Democracy

Democracy develops in a cluster of processes. It is the interplay of several systemic factors, which combine to forge a new perspective in the democratic process. Democracy in a political system and the general governance process develop when the system adopts, domesticates, practices and sustains the key virtues of democracy. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, (as amended) laid down several guidelines for democratic governance. In Chapter 2 precisely, it espoused the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. Other catalysts for democracy include provisions for election, justice administration, exercise of legislative powers and the relationship between the government and the governed. The transformation indicators in the democratic process

are measured by ascertaining to what extent that government is actually a reflection of constitutional government and how it upholds, observes, defends, safeguards and respects Chapter Four of the Constitution, on:

1. right to life: nobody should intentionally deprive any citizen of this right.
2. right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading punishment
3. right to freedom from deprivation of personal liberty.
4. right to dignity of human person
5. right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sex, race or tribe, creed or political opinion and association.
6. right to fair and equal hearing
7. right to private and family life
8. right to freedom of movement
9. right to peaceful assembly and association
10. right to freedom of expression and the press
11. right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
12. right to freedom from slavery and forced labour
13. right to freedom from unlawful imprisonment
14. right to ownership of property
15. right to vote and to be voted for in any given election
16. right to education
17. Right to work and receive commensurate compensation
18. Right to hold public office no matter how sensitive.

The intendment of the provision is to safeguard the rights of the vulnerable members of the society from flagrant abuse by those in authority. It states that citizens of a country should enjoy certain basic inalienable rights and liberties under the law, the violation of which they have the right to seek redress in the law court (Anyaele, 2003). It is a problem whenever the legal instruments cease to regulate the operations of the state and the conduct of those entrusted with public power in their relationships with the ordinary citizen.

3. Theoretical Review

The study adopts systems theory popularised by David Easton, Almond and Powell. The relevance of the theory finds justification in the analysis of how a system is composed of several parts, which play complementary roles for the wellness of the whole system. The underlying assumption is that in every society, government steer the administration of the state and it plays this crucial role by combining efforts with other elements that constitute the subsystem, such as political, economic, social, cultural, religious, and eco-system.

Interestingly, the nature of the political system influences the other systems. This is because the political system is entrusted with the public power to represent and act on behalf of the masses. This power entails multiple activities; receiving demands from the political environment, processing the demands, making decisions, formulating policies, implementing the policies and enforcing compliance, managing the support and

opposition of citizens and remaining transparent and accountable at all time. When any part of the system is dysfunctional, it affects the wholeness and wellness of the entire system. It explains why there is always much emphasis on the part, which the sum total makes the whole.

Governance embodies complex elements and how they function interdependently determines how the system survives. Democracy has defined principles and procedures against which its practice is measured. When the principles and procedures are not followed, it affects the whole system. In other words, political system is a network of interactions and relationships. The system performs optimally when the process is in alignment with the laid down guidelines. It is this means-end relationship that the study investigates; hence, the application of system theory as tool of analysis.

4. Literature Review

According to Anyaele (2003), democracy is a system of government in which all qualified adult citizens share the supreme power directly or through their elected representatives. It is based on popular consent, which government derives from public opinion and government is accountable to the people too (Patterson, 2006). To this extent, the former President of America, Abraham Lincoln argues that democracy presupposes “the government of the people, by the people and for the people” (Enaruna, 2014). In other words, it is “government by consent of the governed”, that is, government with the approval of the people being governed. These are most times more theoretical than practical in Nigeria (Oguejiofor, 2008). Democracy hinges on law; hence, the term, ‘constitutional democracy’. Ayanele, 2003) contends that law is “a set of rules or a higher idea” that controls the excesses of man. From Nigerian perspective, it is amazing how the government of President Buhari conforms or violates the laws of the land and pretends that the government is democratic.

One of the key features of democracy is that it allows the people to choose and reject their leaders and their programmes when such are no longer serving the interest of the people (Dahl, 1989). It appears as the best form of government that can be adopted in a country. It thrives when its key tenets are operational, specially the rule of law that Professor A.V. Dicey popularized. Accordingly, the fundamental assumption, according to Annan (2004) is that,

Those entrusted with the administration of a country should rule or exercise their authority in accordance with the established laws of the land, and such established laws should be regarded as supreme.

The underlying justification of the rule of law in a democracy is that a government rules arbitrarily if it exercises power without any regard to the established laws of the land. This, according to Anyaele, (2003), means that the government should rule according to the provisions of the constitution, and subject to the law; hence, the supremacy of the law. In essence, obedience to the law without discrimination in its application and enforcement is the essence of the democratic state (Doerr, 1998). It

reinforces the notion of equality before the law, which suggests that all citizens are equal before the law. This equality is a farce in Nigeria since President Muhammadu Buhari assumed office on May 29, 2015. In clear terms, law enforcement gives an impression that while some persons are subject to the law; others are not. The marauding AK-47 gun wielding Fulani herders is a vivid example.

The inequality among Nigerians and tribes to the law lends credence to the insistence of Ayanele (2003) that in a true democracy, all men are equal before the law of the land. No one is above the law and the law is no respecter of persons. The law should not be bent to favour anyone or class of people, whether rich or poor, young or old, king or subjects, literate or illiterate, etc (Stockholm, 2012). It poses a challenge where it does not guarantee all citizens of a country equal access to law facilities, including equal rights to fair hearing, and legal advice in the court of law, etc (Suberu, 1988).

This is the type of cases observed in the incessant harassments, arrests and incarceration of Dasuki Sambo, Ibrahim Zakzaky and his wife, Nnamdi Kanu, and Sowore, etc, with the attendant substantial denial of their fundamental rights. Government deliberately flouts court orders, hounds innocent citizens and rarely allows accused persons fair hearing. It tantamount to abuse of Fundamental Human Rights (FHR) and it is very undemocratic.

5. Problematising Democracy in Nigeria

Many leaders do not yet understand the challenges posed by democratic leadership (Janda, et al., 1999), which requires all individuals, to evolve beyond pure self-gratification and short-term thinking into awareness and understanding that harm to one will eventually cause harm to all (Rogers, Singhal & Quinlan, 2003). It invites the individual to step beyond current norms of thinking and behaviour to become conscious of the absolute inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of all things, which creates a precedent condition of one:

- ❖ Becoming aware, that allowing poverty to exist is harmful to all, including the wealthy, and also impacts on the delicate balance of nature on earth.
- ❖ Becoming aware that allowing wasteful damage and the destruction of biodiversity and the earth's natural resources will have a detrimental effect on human wellbeing and our commercial activities, and
- ❖ Becoming aware that commercial and wealth-generation activities that ignore social and environmental consequences will in the long run be harmful to commerce and industry themselves.

Military dictatorship has sunk into the blood stream of many Nigerians who pose as democrats. Worse still, many military officers that aided the near strangulation of the germinating seed of democracy in the country are among the converts who blow democratic trumpet in utter deception. The likes of President Muhammadu Buhari who toppled a civilian government in 1983, suspended the constitution, promulgated draconian decrees, abolished all known democratic institutions and swept the press under the carpet still pose as a democrat. Incidentally, something does not come from nothing. The reasoning of democrats has metamorphosed into cancerous situation of

naivety. In fact, the era was notorious for abuse of human rights and clueless administration based on executive fiat. Such classes of leaders are not democrats and cannot function in a system where democracy flourishes.

Democracy appears successful when it promotes mindset of all-inclusiveness, people-oriented government, and sustainable development (Ajayi & Ojo, 2014). However, it is doubtful if the Buhari-type of democracy has shown concern to conform to the key tenets of democracy. Many Nigerians, despite political party leaning, religious and ethnic affiliations, rate the government low in complying with democratic norms. In fact, many do not know if Nigeria practices democracy compared with how other supposed under-developed countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have practiced it, notwithstanding many things they share in common.

It necessitates few questions. First, does the Nigerian type of democracy have respect for the rule of law? Is the judicial arm of government independent? Do people have political freedom to participate actively in politics? Does the system have a functional free press? Lastly, do the operators of the supposed democracy in Nigeria, for example, observe due process? Answers to these questions will lay bare the type of democracy Nigeria has witnessed under Buhari's administration, beginning from 2015 to 2019.

6. President Muhammadu Buhari's Democratic Insignia

Since 2015 when President Muhammadu Buhari assumed office, issues have come up on most of the aforementioned constitutional rights that citizens are denied. For instance, the right to life has been grossly abused. Nigerians are killed, maimed, kidnapped, their properties destroyed with reckless abandon, and government has usually done nothing to check this abuse (Punch Editorial, Dec. 2019). Right to fair hearing is also abused even as the judiciary, which is supposed to be the hope of the common man, is not respected. The freedom of expression and the press, which is the right of the people to express their feelings on any matter, and for the mass media to perform its constitutional role of educating, informing and entertaining society, has a severe check placed on it. The hallmark was the attempted notorious hate speech legislation and social media regulation. Dahl (1971) argues that stealthy gag of public voice and censor of media through which it is transmitted or communicated for wider audience is a roadblock to political participation and a ploy to oppress the opposition in a democratic system.

The same form of executive control and unwarranted political interference also affects the judiciary. The judicial arm of government which duty is to interpret the law and is the last hope of the common person, has suddenly caved in and emasculated by the executive. The posture of executive absolutism tends to water down the checks and balances implied in the separation of power propounded by Montesquieu (1748). It weakens the operations of other arms of government, other than the executive. However, checks and balances do not advocate "fusion of powers" of the three organs in the performance of their constitutional functions. Rather, it suggests that, in as much as these

organs will be mutually independent, they are to act as watchdog over each other to avoid misuse of power (Lees, 1969).

Generally, judicial independence implies that the judiciary, which is responsible for interpreting the law, ought to ensure fairness, justice and balance, without interference and control by any other arm of government. This enables it to exercise the powers to review both the executive and legislature actions and declare any breach to the constitution null and void and of non-effect. This is not feasible if it lacks independence. The freedom of the press supports effective judicial functions, as it reports activities of all arms of government and thereby promotes checks and balances other than usurpation of power by any arm.

Worthy of note is the fact that President Muhammadu Buhari does not observe and respect many of the democratic rules of engagements that democracy avails to a ruling government. This is despite the fact that many of the actors that surround the president are seasoned lawyers but brazenly chose to pander to either party, sectional or personal interests. Some cases in point include the right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, or tribe, creed or political opinion and association.

This is also observed in the right to peaceful assembly and association; right to freedom of expression and the press; right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to vote and to be voted for ..., and right to hold public office, no matter how sensitive. Essentially, the agitations for secession, resource control and restructuring have their roots in and frequently blamed on the lack of democratic principles, good governance and true federalism in Nigeria, which the administration of President Buhari aggravated to intolerable heights to become major triggers of civil unrest.

In a nutshell, there is absence of a thriving democracy in Nigeria that can engender development. Such environment inhibits robust political participation and free press systems. Wherever the press is not allowed unhindered access to useful information through contrived institutional distortion, obstruction or hindrances on the way and manner of gathering news, reporting and transmission of the news items, it portends danger to democracy. President Buhari's administration is stopping at nothing to clamp on the media houses and prevail on them to shelve the duty of monitoring and reporting government policies and activities.

Fundamentally, the administration promised change, which formed the campaign slogan. Change does not come where due process is very different. According to Doerr (1998), due process involves a guarantee that an individual accused of a crime or faced with legal action would have the opportunity to see that the charges or claims against him are determined by proper legal procedures, without bias, and in open court. The notion of due process resembles procedural fairness. In a broader sense, due process suggests the idea of adequate procedural and legally accepted conducts in compliance with extant laws and order. This has remained a misnomer under President Buhari's government.

President Buhari is acclaimed to be amenable to due process but it has nosedived. Due process is the idea of operating normally in personal and governmental relations, but it lacks in the attitudes of the government towards public policy. There is zero tolerance for respect for norms and values of society, individual rights and liberties, transparency,

fairness, accountability and such other provisions in total conformity with laid down procedures that make for an egalitarian society. It has made many public officeholders in Nigeria to flout judicial decisions or court orders, in declaring their assets and management of public funds. Arguably, nepotism, ethnicity, discrimination, suppression, marginalisation, zero tolerance to opposition and constructive criticism are pathways to instituting autocracy in a democracy.

4. The Potential Dangers to Democracy in Nigeria

The democratic institutions represent the foundation, which strong democracy is built upon and include the election management institutions, rule of law, independent judiciary, free press, political freedom, and due process. In all these indicators, President Buhari's administration has not fared well. In fact, it has failed in securing lives and properties of Nigerians. The administration reportedly interfered in judiciary independence and in one occasion, removed the Chief Justice of the Federation, Justice Walter Samuel Onnoghen, in unwarranted circumstances. Stockholm (2012) cites the observation made by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), which indicates that,

The judiciary, which applies the law to individual cases, acts as the guardian of the rule of law. Thus, an independent and properly functioning judiciary is a prerequisite for the rule of law, which requires a just legal system, the right to a fair hearing and access to justice.

Nigeria cannot, therefore, be said to be promoting the rule of law when an agency of the government thwarts judiciary processes and acts above the law with impunity, as in the case of DSS and Sowore, including similar unethical and unprofessional manners that some human rights and constitutional matters are handled. Former Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Kofi Annan, in his 2004 Report on the Rule of Law defined the concept as:

A principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human right norms and standards. The Rule of Law requires measures to ensure adherence to the principles of Supremacy of the Law, Equality before the Law, and Accountability to the Law, fairness in the application of the law, Separation of Powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness, and procedural and transparency.

Detention without trial litters the administration of President Buhari. Importantly, Nigeria's criminal laws permit the courts to admit accused persons to bail pursuant to Section 36(5) of the constitution, which provides that every person, which is charged with a criminal offence, shall be presumed to be innocent until he is proved guilty by a competent court of law. It is ironical to witness how the administration of President Buhari simultaneously and concurrently plays the role of judiciary, legislature and cares

less about its consequences. The regime deploys security agencies to harass people, incarcerate accused persons or perceived opponents without court trial or formal prosecution, and where government or the security agencies do not honour an order given by courts of competent jurisdiction.

Conversely, the courts or the judiciary is the ultimate organ of government to determine the deprivation of the personal liberty of a person. Security agencies for example, can only hold accused persons for a temporary period not exceeding 24 to 48 hours without court interference. Their duty, in this regard, is to arrest on suspicion of commission of an offence, to investigate, and charge to court. The agencies can diligently prosecute the charge within the court hierarchy and abide by the decision of the court at every stage. It is not within the purview of any security agency to determine the guilt of an accused person or unilaterally detain the person. As a common occurrence in the administration of President Buhari, Hagopian (1975) notes that such illicit practices breed revolutionary trends.

5. Summary and Recommendations

The failure of the present government to address the issues of human right abuses as expressed in excesses of security agencies, the wanton destruction of lives and property, in addition to electoral fraud and do or die mentality in ascension to positions of authority are indications that democracy under President Buhari and the nation's democratisation process is not maturing. In fact, democracy has eroded in an unprecedented magnitude. It has suffered a serious setback, and face extinction from the same set of people that wear democracy vests.

In the light of the above discussions, the following recommendations appear apt both for an improved democratisation to foster institutional capacities as well as for development of human and natural resources in Nigeria that serve as evidence of dividends of democracy:

- ❖ There should be complete respect for the rule of law, independent judiciary, free press, political freedom, and due process by government.
- ❖ The interests of citizens (the people) should be considered both in the formulation and in the implementation of policies that affect them.
- ❖ The concept of 'the people' in democracy should be addressed objectively and not thwarted under any pretense or consideration to deny the people stake in the system.
- ❖ Government in democracy should not be seen to be brutal and dictatorial to its citizens. It is the people's government and they should have both a say and a way, and not constructed into an empire by and for the small group of representatives in power.

- ❖ The democratic process should be all-inclusive. It should make its dividends available to its citizens. That way the people feel attached and have a sense of belonging to and identification with the government.
- ❖ A free press is a vital element of democracy; it serves as the link between the people and government and vice-versa. The press should not be disallowed by government to perform its onerous duties to society and to point to its wrongs, so that the government does not tend towards dictatorship and no longer democratic.
- ❖ Government should put measures in place to ensure security of lives and property. A government that watches and sees its citizens and their property destroyed on daily basis is a weak one and not trusted to protect them in time of external aggression.
- ❖ Government functionaries at all levels should be disciplined, and willing to sacrifice some comfort in order for their citizens to feel the impact of governance.
- ❖ Government should make available social amenities that the people need. When the people are suffering from bad road network and poor quality of electricity supply, food scarcity, and high medical bills, they tend to doubt the rationale for democracy.

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